

Project Notes

Innovative Programs to Improve Access of the Poor to Urban Environmental Services in Andhra Pradesh

Urban local bodies (ULBs) in India are challenged to improve environmental services, especially for slum dwellers. The state of Andhra Pradesh devised four programs that linked central and state government resources with those of urban bodies and community-based women's groups and other local partners who brought new services to the poor in cities throughout the state. The USAID FIRE-D project sponsored an evaluation of these innovative programs as part of its effort to build the capacity of urban officials and their partners to provide better services to all. This Project Note describes these four programs, their results, and the lessons learned by the participants.

Andhra Pradesh, like other states in India, is faced with the need to help cities leverage resources to meet the growing demand for environmental services, including water, sanitation, and solid waste management. The Government of Andhra Pradesh successfully integrated national urban poverty alleviation and slum improvement programs into state schemes to improve access of the poor to these services. Officials tapped the Government of India's Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rojgar Yojana (SJSRY), the National Slum Development Program (NSDP), and the Integrated Low Cost Sanitation (ILCS) programs that function as follows:

- The focus of SJSRY is self-employment and wage employment through empowerment of poor communities. The program helps to establish community-based organizations (CBOs) and a community development society (CDS), a citywide association of CBOs, to work with city officials. The CDSs prioritize viable projects proposed by CBOs, identify beneficiaries, and help implement the projects.
- The NSDP supports the provision of adequate water supply and environmental improvement in low-income areas. Seventy percent of the program amount awarded is a loan and 30 percent is a grant.

- The ILCS program assists economically weaker groups to convert existing dry latrines into pour or flush latrines and to build new latrines.

Since a key objective of the FIRE project is to ensure access of the poor to urban environmental services, it commissioned a study to document and identify lessons learned from four state initiatives in Andhra Pradesh. Mr. K. Rajeswara Rao, the Managing Director of the Andhra Pradesh Urban Finance and Infrastructure Development Corporation and the Project Coordinator of the Andhra Pradesh Urban Services for the Poor project, conducted the study.

The four state programs, described below, were implemented in the 116 ULBs throughout the state beginning in 1998.

1. Community-Based Solid Waste Management

***CBOs clean roads and drains and transport
solid waste to collection sites.***

One municipality in the Hyderabad metro area used the SJSRY program to entrust the municipal sanitation function to a poor community. After convening meetings with residents, the Kukatpally

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municipality contracted with a self-help group, Mother Theresa Stree Samaja Podupu Sangam, to clean roads and drains in a 12 kilometer square area and transport solid waste to designated collection points. Non-government organizations (NGOs) trained the woman's group in group dynamics, accounting, management, hygiene, sanitation, leadership, communication skills, and personality development. The city subsidized the Sangam's purchase of a tractor with a grant and obtained a loan from Andhra Bank for the remainder. All Sangam members worked on the assignment. It also employed 14 men and women from the neighborhood to clean roads and drains and collect and remove garbage.

The Kukatpally program cost Rs. 3.55 crore from 1998-2001.¹ The bank loan provided Rs. 2.24 crore. SJSRY provided the remainder, Rs. 1.3 crore, with 75 percent from the GOI and 25 percent from the state.

The program overcame the constraints—diffidence and reluctance of the poor to participate, inexperience of the local body, and threats from other contractors—by continuous support. The study identified leadership development and social and economic empowerment as the major reasons for success. Other achievements were development of partnerships, improved urban environment, and sustainable employment of the poor. The program developed confidence among women, resulted in increased thrift and savings, and contributed to a better quality of life and gender equality. Moreover, it resulted in savings for the ULB, improved its image, and contributed to a cleaner environment and greater community satisfaction.

The initiative's environmental, social, and economic impacts motivated other ULBs and CBOs to replicate it, resulting in the formation of 105 women's sanitation groups in 53 cities throughout the state.

2. Community Contracting of Urban Infrastructure Services

CBOs build roads and drains and install street lights and water supply lines.

In community contracting, the government's role is enabler and facilitator and community organizations implement small infrastructure works (less than Rs. 2.5 lakhs). The beneficiaries participate in needs identification, planning, execution, and maintenance, ensuring better quality and developing a sense of ownership of the assets created. The ULB extends support to CBOs at every stage, approves plans and funding, and monitors implementation.

The state introduced the program as part of SJSRY and NSDP. It set up procedures, provided training with the help of the Regional Center for Urban Environmental Studies of Osmania University, extended financial help, provided guidance, and monitored implementation.

¹ Rs. 1 crore = US\$ 208,300; Rs. 1 lakh = US\$ 2,083; US\$ 1 = Rs. 48 (est.); Rs = rupees.

The Kapra municipality successfully carried out 84 civil works through the community contracting system under SJSRY and NSDP in 2000-2001. These works were selected and prioritized by nearly 200 CBOs and the CDS in the city of about 150,000 people. The works awarded to the women's groups included building cement roads and drains, and laying stone paving and caste iron pipelines. The total cost of the works was Rs. 78 lakhs.

CBOs identified roads and drains and the ULB contracted with them to do the construction work.

The program employed poor community members, facilitated their active participation, built their confidence to carry out their responsibilities, and saved resources for the local body and the community group. The quality of service provided under these contracts with CBOs was equal to and in some cases even better than that under the conventional contracting system with private contractors.

The initiative also contributed to greater transparency in procurement of materials, costs, time schedules, and contractors through sustained information dissemination efforts. This successful initiative was a result of state government support—policy, administrative procedure, training and orientation, and close monitoring and support of ULBs.

Pressures from councilors and contractors, non-cooperation of engineers, internal squabbles, and suspicions among the groups all threatened the program. But officials overcame these barriers by providing motivation, counseling, and support. From 1998 to 2001, women's groups completed more than 9,800 infrastructure works, mostly roads and drains, costing Rs.101.48 crore.

3. Own Your Tap Scheme: Water Supply for the Poor

Women's groups install household water connections.

The state government used NSDP to provide household water connections in slums. This initiative extended water lines to poor localities and facilitated provision of water connections by offering a 50 percent subsidy to residents. In two years from 1999 to 2001, 57,000 individual tap connections were installed in slums throughout the state. (Total cost: Rs. 17.19 crore.)

Similar efforts failed in the past due to local officials' misconception that the poor are habituated to enjoy free water and cannot afford to pay water tariffs, and are hampered by land issues and legal constraints. But the successful implementation of this program that required residents to pay 50 percent of the costs (45 percent financed through a loan) dispelled this view.

The program's success was due to: an effective communication strategy; encouraging active

involvement of CBOs; adopting community development and extension education approaches; as well as simplified procedures, timely release of funds, and close monitoring. The women's groups hired local plumbers. Municipal engineers provided technical assistance and inspected the work.

Women's Groups Extend a Water Supply Pipeline to Johrapuram Settlement

Improvements in the water supply had been a long-pending demand of residents of Johrapuram, a poor settlement in the Kurnool Municipal Corporation. The scheme consisted of laying a 2.6 km long pipeline. A women's group completed it in six months. Fifty percent of the cost, Rs. 29.00 lakhs, was from NSDP and households contributed the remainder for new individual water connections. The formerly empty reservoir is filled every day. The people of Johrapuram have enough drinking water with sufficient pressure. About 700 families have new water tap connections and no longer depend on the canal and borewells for water. The women's group saved about Rs. 4 lakhs in executing the project and it is now using this fund for a micro-credit project.

The program resulted in enormous savings of time and energy by the urban poor, particularly women, and water conservation. It generated additional resources for the municipality through water tariffs, reduced the number of public stand posts, and improved environmental sanitation in poor habitats.

4. Low Cost Sanitation

Women's groups build flush toilets for homes.

The program to build sanitary flush latrines in slum settlements gained momentum with the launch of the state government's *clean and green campaign*. In the past, rigid procedures and rules, lack of community awareness, and poor understanding of the social and economic consequences of poor sanitation, contributed to slow progress in implementing low-cost sanitation programs in India.

The program's targeted approach and partnerships between stakeholders—central, state and local governments, the urban poor and their CBOs, banks, Osmania University, UNICEF, the private sector, and the press—facilitated its success. Concerted efforts to launch awareness campaigns, mobilize the poor, simplify rules, permit households freedom of choice, quickly process applications through delegation of powers, and close monitoring, also contributed to its success. Participation of non-officials and NGOs and social audits by CBOs aided local officials' efforts. From 1993 to 1998, only 40,000 toilets were built statewide, but from 1999 to 2001, because of the new campaign approach, nearly 400,000 toilets were built. (Total cost: Rs. 239 crore.)

Forging Effective Partnerships

The FIRE-sponsored evaluation found that ULBs play a critical role in program implementation. In addition, the active involvement of the community and CBOs, concerted efforts of the state government, assignment of responsibilities to individuals and institutions, simplification of sanctioning procedures, and close and periodic monitoring by public officials are critical to program success.

Each of the four programs is a partnership of the central and state governments, ULBs, CBOs, and NGOs. The private sector, banks, financial intermediaries, academic institutions, and international agencies also contributed to these partnerships. The responsibilities of the partners in these programs are as follows:

Government of India

- Sanction schemes and provide guidelines
- Provide funds under SJSRY and NSDP

Municipal Administration and Urban Development Department (Government of Andhra Pradesh)

- Design program and operational guidelines
- Issue Government Orders for implementation
- Provide matching funds and administrative support
- Contract with NGO/academic institution to train CBOs
- Mobilize technical assistance from public health engineers
- Arrange state guarantee of municipal loans
- Monitor implementation and promote replication
- Facilitate formation of women's CBOs
- Conduct information, communication, and education campaigns
- Organize regional conferences

ULBs

- Identify and support women's groups, facilitate formation of community groups
- Entrust civic responsibilities to CBOs
- Approve and supervise work, pay for services
- Provide technical and administrative support
- Contact bank for loans
- Organize one-day skills training for CBOs
- Organize slum meetings and promote involvement of beneficiaries
- Provide infrastructure and water connections
- Disburse subsidies to beneficiaries

CBOs

- Provide solid waste management services, maintain vehicles
- Develop professionalism, group leadership, community involvement

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- Mobilize members' five percent contribution
 - Share earnings, repay loans
 - Select, prioritize, and execute works
 - Conduct education and awareness programs
 - Collect applications for water taps and latrines from residents
 - Certify stage of construction of latrines to release payment
 - Engage retired engineers for technical support
- NGOs*
- Provide capacity building and training
 - Conduct research and evaluate programs
- Private Sector*
- Provide construction materials and equipment
- Banks and Financial Intermediaries*
- Release and recover loans from CBOs and residents

Summary of Recommendations

The author's recommendations are based on discussions with stakeholders, visits to ULBs, and an analysis of monthly, quarterly, and year-end reports from ULBs and other documents.

Community involvement, empowerment of communities, particularly of women, and an active role for them in planning, design, programming, implementation and monitoring will ensure community ownership. This sense of ownership results in effective implementation of poverty reduction and development programs. Statutory recognition of community-based organizations is a way to increase effective participation by communities. Guidelines, rules, and procedures for program implementation should be simple, clear, flexible, and transparent. Bottom-up planning, decentralized decision-making, participatory appraisal, timely release of funds, and other interventions are essential. Building capacity of officials, non-officials and communities, complemented by information, education, and communication material, contributes to greater awareness and understanding. An effective communication strategy is vital for all community-oriented programs. Dissemination of best practices and sharing of success stories—including the reasons for success and failure—together with incentives and disincentives, motivates the functionaries and communities and instills confidence, leading to their active participation and effective program implementation.

This *Project Note* highlights the principal findings of the report, *Innovative Programs to Improve Access of the Poor to Urban Infrastructure Services in Andhra Pradesh*, written by Mr. K. Rajeswara Rao (Dec. 2001). Chetan Vaidya of the FIRE-D project provided technical guidance. The full report is available from the FIRE-D office in New Delhi and TCG International in Washington, DC. All *Project Notes* are available online at www.dec.org, title search FIRE-D, and on NIUA's site, www.indiaurbaninfo.com, under newsletters.

The mission of the Indo-US FIRE-D Project is to institutionalize the delivery of commercially viable urban environmental infrastructure and services at the local, state and national levels. Since 1994, the Project has been working to support the development of demonstration projects and of a sustainable urban infrastructure finance system. Now, the Project is also pursuing this mission through:

- Expansion of the roles of the private sector, NGOs and CBOs in the development, delivery, operation and maintenance of urban environmental infrastructure;
- Increased efficiency in the operation and maintenance of existing water supply and sewerage systems;
- Strengthened financial management systems at the local level;
- Development of legal and regulatory frameworks at the state level;
- Continued implementation of the 74th Constitutional Amendment; and
- Capacity-building through the development of an Urban Management Training Network.

The FIRE-D Project Office

E-3/4, Vasant Vihar
New Delhi 110 057, India
Tel: (91-11) 614-3551 or 614-9836
Fax: (91-11) 614-1420
savita@indo-usfired.com

Regional Urban Development Office USAID/New Delhi

American Embassy
Shantipath, Chanakypuri
New Delhi 110 021, India

TCG International, LLC

1012 N Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-4297, USA
(202) 667-3002

PADCO, Inc.

1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW, #170
Washington, DC 20007, USA

Funded under USAID Contract
#386-C-00-99-00071-00

The *Project Notes* series is edited by Kathy Desmond.